

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 35, No. 7

July 15, 1966

Whole No. 406

Now They're Collectors' Items

#1 Edward S. Ellis and Harry Castlemon

by J. Edward Leithead



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 79

YOUNG BROADBRIM WEEKLY

30 issues numbered 52 through 81. The first 51 numbers were devoted to the adventures of Old Broadbrim and were named Old Broadbrim Weekly. Number 52 was dated September 26, 1903, and the last issue, No. 81, was dated April 23, 1904. Colored covers, 32 pages, 8x10 inches.

Now They're Collectors' Items

#1 Edward S. Ellis and Harry Castlemon

by J. Edward Leithead

(continued)

Although the American frontier was his favorite stamping-ground, Ellis wrote of other lands in his Foreign Adventure Series—Lost in the Forbidden Land, River and Jungle, The Hunt of the White Elephant. Then there was The True Grit Series—Jim and Joe, Secret of Coffin Island, Dorsey, the Young Inventor. Also The Paddle Your Own Canoe Series—The Forest Messengers, The Mountain Star, Queen of the Clouds. The Flying Boys Series (these were later writings, as the subject indicates)—The Flying Boys in the Sky, The Flying Boys to the Rescue; and The Catamount Camp Series—Captain of the Camp, Catamount Camp.

One of Edward S. Ellis' many pseudonyms was "Col. H. R. Gordon," under which he penned an excellent historical series featuring famous Indian chiefs, although the heroes were young white scouts in buckskin in each book: Pontiac, Chief of the Ottawas, A Tale of the Siege of Detroit; Black Partridge, or, The Fall of Fort Dearborn; Tecumseh, Chief of the Shawanoes, A Tale of the War of 1812; Red Jacket, the Last of the Senecas; Logan, the Mingo, A Story of the Frontier; Osceola, Chief of the Seminoles. These were published by E. P. Dutton & Co. in a very attractive edition, with illustrations by Wm. M. Cary. (Another book on the same publisher's list, similar style of binding, same illustrator, but by a different author, Ellbridge S. Brooks, was The Master of the Strong Hearts, A Story of Custer's Last Rally. Sitting Bull is a

leading character, and this volume might very well be included to round out the series about famous Indian chiefs).

Patriot and Tory and The Boy Patriot were two Revolutionary War stories by Ellis, and A. L. Burt Co. published the following from his pen: The Young Scout, Adrift in the Wilds, A Young Hero, A Jaunt Through Java and Lost in the Rockies. Another frontier tale of his was Red Plume, the publisher I do not recall. David McKay published six of his books in a good clothbound edition: Arthur Helmuth, Check No. 2134, From Tent to White House, Perils of the Jungle, and a series of two, On the Trail of Geronimo and The White Mustang. Uncrowning a King, an Indian tale, and Among the Esquimaux were published by the Penn Publishing Co. (and perhaps other titles as well).

Some textbooks and a number of books of history, one series consisting of 8 volumes, were written by Ellis, and it is amazing he was able to write so many books of uniform excellence when one considers that he was also occupied successively by the duties of school teacher, school principal and superintendent of schools. But I understand he turned to writing exclusively sometime in the '80s.

Next to Edward S. Ellis, my favorite author of cloth-bound books was Harry Castlemon (real name Charles Austin Fosdick). All the boys I knew read Castlemon in those days (and Ellis and Alger and Stratemeyer and dime novels). My first was Frank in

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the Mountains, borrowed from a friend. I was entranced by that exciting story of trappers and Indians, and the youthful hero, Frank Nelson. Remember Black Bill, the outlaw, captured by Archie Winters and Adam Brent, and Dick Lewis at the torture stake in the Indian village, released by old Bob Kelly in the guise of a medicine man who accidentally (on purpose) slung his tomahawk so close as to sever Dick's bonds? And the last ditch fight at Fort Stockton, soldiers and trappers overwhelmed by a redskin horde, those who were still alive forced to fight their way out with the palisades in flames? Frank and his cousin, Archie Winters, were two of Castlemon's greatest characters. Close seconds were the two trappers who helped the boys through many a perilous situation, Dick Lewis and old Bob Kelly.

After reading my first Castlemon you may be sure I looked up the rest of his books, starting with the Gunboat Series of 6 volumes, published by Porter & Coates, then John C. Winston Co., following Frank and Archie's adventures in Frank, the Young Naturalist, Frank in the Woods, Frank on the Prairie. Through the Civil War in Frank on a Gunboat, Frank on the Lower Mississippi, Frank Before Vicksburg. Then on into the Far West in the Rocky Mountain Series: Frank Among the Rancheros, Frank at Don Carlos' Rancho, Frank in the Mountains (sure, I read that one again, many times). For Western stories for boys you couldn't beat the Rocky Mountain Series.

But if you want to read these books in proper sequence you have to ignore the fact that six of them are grouped under the series title Gunboat. As I have said, both Porter & Coates and the Winston Co. issued them thus, the former publication having a uniform design on all six volumes of a gunboat delivering hot shot. However, the first three titles, the Young Naturalist, in the Woods and on the Prairie should have been given another series title. And, as I discovered one day in the long ago,

from two cheaply made and battered copies of "in the Woods" and "on the Prairie," bearing the Winston imprint, they were—titled the Frank and Archie Series. I have no doubt that "the Young Naturalist" was included, and that Porter & Coates published a similar combination of the three before Winston took over.

Here, in the Frank and Archie Series, Frank Nelson first meets Dick Lewis, the trapper, on a visit to New England, and Dick spins him some wonderful yarns of old Bob Kelly, "best trapper on the prairie," of Indian fighting and life in the Far West in general. In Frank on the Prairie, he and Archie start west with a wagon train for the ranch of Frank's uncle in California. Indians attack the train, Frank gets caught in a buffalo stampede, there is no lack of excitement. Dick Lewis is with the train, and the boys meet the fabulous Bob Kelly.

The last three volumes of the Gunboat Series are about the Civil War. But does Frank leave the wagon train at some point and enlist in the Union Navy? He does not; he isn't old enough and the Civil War is yet some years away. After reading Frank on the Prairie you should read Frank Among the Rancheros, where you will find Frank and Archie and the two trappers arrived at the California ranch of Frank's uncle. And from there on to the end of the Rocky Mountain Series. Then, for Frank and Archie's Civil War experiences return to the last three volumes of the Gunboat Series.

These nine volumes did not end Frank's adventures. He and Archie turned up in the last of the three volumes of The Sportsman's Club Series—The Sportsman's Club in the Saddle, The Sportsman's Club Afloat, The Sportsman's Club Among the Trappers—entering the story in Chapter II, with a footnote stating, "The heroes of the 'Gunboat' and 'Rocky Mountain' series." It is after the close of the Civil War, Frank is Captain Nelson of the U. S. Navy, now, "nearly twenty-three years old, and

Archie a few months younger."

Another old friend reappears in this story—Dick Lewis, the trapper. Frank finds Dick in irons at Fort Bolton, accused of being one of a gang of outlaws. Of course, it isn't so—he's working undercover for the colonel commanding the post to roundup the gang.

But Dick complains of the changing times to Frank: "... 'You don't know what's been ago'in' on in this yere country since you left it. Them railroads have come through here, jest as I told you they would; folks from the States have come flockin' in and settlin', an' killin' the buffaler by thousands, an' now thar ain't elbow-room fur sich fellers as me, nor grub nuth'r.'"

Before the story ends, old Bob Kelly, Dick Lewis' trapper chum, also reappears, posing as one of the outlaws.

A new series about Frank and Archie followed, The Frank Nelson Series. In the first volume, Snowed Up, or, The Sportsman's Club in the Mountains, the locale is Western, the same as Among the Trappers, and Dick and old Bob again accompany the boys. In volume two, Frank in the Forecastle, or, The Sportsman's Club Among the Whalers, Frank and Archie are off to sea and the two trappers have their first experience on shipboard. In the third and concluding volume they are still adventuring afar, The Boy Traders, or, The Sportsman's Club Among the Boers.

The Pony Express Series contained The Pony Express Rider (with an excellent frontispiece of the hero, a Pony expressman, helping an injured Indian chief), Carl, the Trailer (which features the Battle of Wounded Knee, terminating the Ghost Dance troubles with the Sioux), and The White Beaver. The latter sounds like a Western, but isn't. It always seemed to this reader that it would have been more appropriate to include as the third volume of this series, Castlemon's Winged Arrow's Medicine, or, The Massacre at Fort Phil Kearney, an historical tale with excellent illustra-

tions, although it was published several years after the other three, about 1903, by the Saalfeld Co. The Pony Express Series was published by Henry T. Coates & Co. and by John C. Winston Co., the latter in a library edition matching other volumes of Castlemon's to make a large and handsome set of his works.

Then there was Elam Storm, the Wolfer, or, The Lost Nugget, which had a sequel, The Missing Pocket-book, or, Tom Mason's Luck (a Western in spite of its title). The Haunted Mine was, of course, a mining tale. Another Western was Gilbert, the Trapper, or, The Heir in Buckskin, Castlemon using still another pseudonym, "Captain C. B. Ashley," this cloth-bound book being published by David McKay. A story of Castlemon's, White-Horse Fred, or, Julian Among the Outlaws, was serialized in Street & Smith's Good News, but I have never seen it reprinted as a book. It may be the same story as Julian Mortimer, with title changed, but I never saw a copy of this book to check.

But Harry Castlemon didn't write only Westerns. The Boy Trapper Series—The Buried Treasure, The Boy Trapper, The Mail-Carrier—had nothing to do with the Far West. The Roughing It Series contained two with Western locale, George in Camp, or, Life on the Plains, and George at the Fort, or, Life Among the Soldiers, but the third volume, George at the Wheel, or, Life in the Pilot-house, speaks for itself, a riverboat story. He wrote the Rod and Gun Series, Go-Ahead Series, Houseboat Series, Afloat and Ashore Series—at least three volumes to each series, and sometimes more. The six volumes of the War Series—True to His Colors, Rodney, the Partisan, Rodney, the Overseer, Marcy, the Blockade-Runner, Marcy, the Refugee, Sailor Jack, the Trader all are about the Civil War and well worth reading. They present it from both Northern and Southern viewpoints to some extent, as in the Blue and Gray Weekly published by Frank Tousey.

The Camp in the Foothills, Floating

Treasure, Joe Wayring at Home, Oscar in Africa, Our Fellows, or, Skirmishing With the Swamp Dragoons, Snagged and Sunk, The Steel Horse, or, The Rambles of a Bicycle, Two Ways of Becoming a Hunter, The First Capture, Guy Harris, the Runaway, were all by Castlemon, but my list is incomplete. How those old-time writers could turn them out! And they sold steadily, year after year.

What are your wants in Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundups between Nos. 1 and 237. May have your wants. Some are reprints. Full of interesting items. 12 for \$1.00.

Ralph F. Cummings
161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.
01560

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

255. Lloyd W. Currey, c/o J. S. Canner & Co., Inc., 618 Parker St., Roxbury, Mass. 02120 (New Member)
4. George French, Kezar Falls, Maine, 04047 (Change in address)
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NOTE: In the June issue Mr. Warner's ad read 520 to 684 and 280 to 590. This was an editorial error and I hope has not caused too much difficulty to Mr. Warner or to quoters.

LOOKING BACK . . .

by Harry Pulfer

Looking back to the turn of the Century it seems that we had few outside amusements, there were no automobiles, if we had horses they had to have their rest, so the Buggy trips were few and far between. No radio, no television, but the movies were in the offing. Everybody visited, gathered around the old piano and sang songs, read a lot, and just visited, the squeaky rocker on the front porch was never still in the evenings. If you had a hammock you were in luck. You could swing. Or as we would say today, "A real Swinger."

Every kid I knew was absorbed in the adventures of "Diamond Dick" with his long blonde hair, the craftiness of Nick Carter, the saga of "Buffalo Bill." The Liberty Boys of 76 had their supporters and we had just won the Spanish-American war and the "Rough Riders" would ride again in sensational fiction. The lurid colors of the folio type Nickel Novels were fascinating to us kids. On the covers were depicted the great moment of the 32 pages. The back was full of odd facts to intrigue us.

Buck Rogers and the Superman were long in the future but we had our own Science Fiction novels. How about No. 1 of Frank Reade Weekly? "The White Cruiser of the Clouds"—with rotors—no less, Oct. 31, 1902. Or his #17 of the earlier Black and White Library out on January 14, 1893, in which Frank makes a trip under the NORTH POLE by submarine . . . This was actually accomplished in 1956 or 63 years later . . . How about that! Then look at Nick Carter #538 out April 20, 1907 . . . The "Seven Headed Monster" a sort of land-anywhere Helicopter . . . long before the name had been invented . . . Plus the fact that HORROR stories were a big deal even in those days.

Now the whole thing started right after the Civil War in England and the Penny Papers soon were called the "Penny Dreadfuls" and they still are

in the Encyclopedia Britannica. About 1895 the use of 3 color covers raised the price to "tupence (2d). Our own publishers soon were issuing these newspapers by the thousands.

"The Boys of New York" was a full sized Newspaper in 1888. However the trend was evident as the "Boys and Girls Weekly" of 1882 was quite a bit smaller. This was the era when Oliver Optic and Horatio Alger had their novels published in paperback form. Beadles Pocket Library in 1891 was still too big to fit comfortably in the pocket. Then the DIME novels were reduced to a Nickel.

That should illustrate that they were popular. I read them in bed, back of the outhouse, and anywhere else except in the house, these paperbacks were the work of the devil and I was warned I would come to no good if I continued reading that wicked trash. Reading them again in 1966, they seem innocuous enough. The wicked get their just desserts. The hero wins the girl. Right triumphs, history lives again, the funny cars, boats, aeroplanes and balloons we laughed at are now here to stay.

Now I am an automobile man . . . I collect almost everything about cars. So I am searching the thousands of books, novels, dime and nickel novels that were issued for those that refer to or that show cars. I have found about 100 Nickel Novels that have cars on the covers. As an ex-racing man, the covers that show race cars are particularly welcome. I have around 100 now and want all there are. To that end I will BUY, SELL or TRADE for any not on my list. Please help.

Tip Top Weekly #185, Oct. 28, 1899 shows a Steam Car almost run down by a locomotive. "Three Chums" #47 of September 28, 1900, shows one of the Electric Taxi's that would be used for several years in New York. Of all the racing scenes the "Wide Awake Weekly" #1 of April 20th, 1906, is most precious as the White Steamer that is racing the Darracq and Christie is positively identified by a photo I have of Jay Webb in the White

Steamer at Rockaway Park Track in 1905.

The Nickel Novel in its handling of the automobile kept up with the cars of that era. I have a nice cover of a PACKARD hitting a tree stump and it is typical of the 1909 Packard "30" of that date. (Nick Carter Weekly #665 of Sept. 25, 1909.)

I have shown these racing pictures to some of the great artists of our present time and they got a great kick out of them. My hope is to sell the lot to a Speedway Museum for permanent display, so that all may enjoy them.

I also save sheet music that has to do with cars. I am in the market for a genuine copy of "In my Merry Oldsmobile" by Gus Edwards, the most famous of them all. I do have the 2nd most popular title, "He'd have to get under—Get out and get Under" (to fix up your automobile) by Clarke and Lesile published in 1912. If anyone has any old sheet music I would like to buy it. Even this goes into a Museum collection for the enjoyment of lots of people.

"Motor Stories" came out in February of 1909 and I have all of them except #4 and #28.

While I do not collect nickel novels as such I would be happy to have help from members in adding to my collection. Like they say in the margarine ads—"Spread the word."

DIME NOVEL COLLECTORS' BOOK SHELF

STRANGE SIGNPOSTS, An Anthology of the Fantastic, Edited by Sam Moskowitz and Roger Elwood. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Publishers, New York, Chicago and San Francisco. 319 p. \$5.50. Included in the anthology is an excerpt from No. 91 Frank Reade Library, "Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search for a Lost Man in His Latest Air Wonder." Mr. Moskowitz is the only anthologist who has recognized the contribution of dime novels to the science-fiction field. Mr. Moskowitz is a subscriber to the Dime Novel Round-up.

NOTES

Mr. Frank Acker who is associated with Brown University as a development officer gave an hour talk about dime novels at the John Hay Library of Brown University. The lecture was attended by 100 or so "Friends" of the library. He sprinkled his talk about the history of dime novels with many quotes from the old timers and these proved to get the most response and comment from the audience. The "lowly" dime novel has finally made it in the world of letters.

Charles Bragin writes that Beadles Dime Library No. 204 "Big Foot Wallace, the King of the Lariat; or, Wild Wolf, the Waco" will be reprinted by the Steck Vaughn Co., P. O. Box 2028, Austin, Texas. It will be a book about Wallace which will include the above reprint. The book will probably sell for \$6.00 a copy.

Frank Schott is sweet on Buffalo Bill Stories. If you have any in good condition, better send him your for sale list of them, for he needs a lot of them. He's also interested in Ace High and Nick Carter Magazines, pulps in good condition, also books on Palmer Cox. He is H. H. Bro. #119. Oh yes, he likes Doc Savage and the Shadows, too.

Through the efforts of Mr. Ross Crauford the serialization of the first Pluck and Luck, "Dick Decker, the Young Fireman" has been discovered. It was published in Boys of New York Nos. 425 through 439 under the title "Frank Firm, the Young Fireman; or, Through Flame and Smoke." Mr. George Sahr was the first to note the similarity of titles and Mr. Ross Crauford verified it by actual check of the stories. Those of you who have purchased a copy of the Boys of New York Bibliographic Listing should correct the listing by adding the following information on Page 19 following the title "Frank Firm" (1 PL; 451 PL; 1252).

WANTED

OLD BROADBRIM WEEKLY

Nos. 1 through 51,
Oct. 4, 1902 to Sept. 19, 1903,
Pub. Street & Smith.

YOUNG BROADBRIM WEEKLY

Nos. 53 through 60, 62 through 66, 68,
70 through 73, 75 through 78 and 80.
(1903-1904, Street & Smith)

Quaker Collection

Haverford College Library,
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lectors and dealers, reviews of new books and unusual magazines,
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